

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-11 are pending in the application. It is gratefully acknowledged that the Examiner finds allowable subject matter in Claims 2, 3 and 5-11. As indicated above, Claim 1 has been amended.

In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected Claims 1 and 4 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Howe (U.S. Patent 5,664,978). Withdrawal of these rejections are respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claim 1 has been amended to clearly recite the transmission as “directly driving a respective plurality of output shafts at independent plurality of speed-ratios”.

Independent Claim 1 recites that at least one transmission directly drives a respective plurality of output shafts at independent plurality of speed-ratios. In contrast, Howe teaches that one transmission indirectly drives at least one output shafts at independent one speed ratio through differentials 13 and brakes 29, 30 (see Fig. 1 of Howe). In contrast to Howe, an advantage of the present invention of Claim 1 is that at least one transmission directly drives a respective plurality of output shafts at independent plurality of speed-ratios without differentials and brakes, thereby simplifying a power train of a vessel.

With respect to the §102(b) rejection of independent Claim 1, the Examiner states that Howe discloses all the elements of this claim. Neither the cited section nor any other section of Howe discloses at least one transmission directly driving a respective plurality of output shafts at independent plurality of speed-ratios, as recited in amended independent Claim 1. Therefore, amended Claim 1 is not anticipated by Howe and it is respectfully requested that the rejection of Claim 1 and 4 be withdrawn.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that all of the pending claims, i.e., Claims 1-11, are in condition for allowance.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully requests substantive examination of the claims. It is respectfully submitted that these changes are in form only and do not add new matter to the subject application. It is also submitted that these changes are not made in accordance with any statutory requirement for patentability, but are merely made for purposes of clarity in the claims.

A petition for an automatic one month extension of time is enclosed together with the petition fee. The Commissioner is authorized to charge LEXYOUME's Deposit Account No. 504054 for any additional fees required under 37 CFR §§1.16 and 1.17 and to credit any overpayment to said Deposit Account No. 504054.

Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference or personal interview would facilitate resolution of any remaining matters, the Examiner may contact Applicants' attorney at the number given below.

Respectfully Submitted,



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